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Department of State **EXCISE** INCOMING TELEGRAM

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5146
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PA

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E.O. 12065: GDS 10/3/86 (LAWRENCE, LOREN) OR-M
TAGS: PINS, PINT, JM
SUBJECT: ELECTION PROSPECTS

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. JAMAICA'S NATIONAL ELECTION IS WIDELY EXPECTED TO BE HELD LATE IN OCTOBER OR EARLY IN NOVEMBER. WE ESTIMATE THAT IF THE ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY, THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP) WOULD WIN AT LEAST 35 SEATS IN THE PARLIAMENT. THE JLP ENJOYS SEVERAL MAJOR ADVANTAGES, INCLUDING THE DOWNWARD SLIDE OF THE ECONOMY UNDER THE PNP GOVERNMENT, THE SUPPORT OF IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION WHICH PREVIOUSLY BACKED THE PNP, A STRONG LEAD IN THE MOST REPECTED POLL HERE, THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENT THAT NO PARTY HAS WON A THIRD TERM, THE NEUTRALITY OF THE SECURITY FORCES, SIGNIFICANT REFORMS IN THE ELECTORAL MACHINERY AND THE SUPPORT OF THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR NEWSPAPER. WORKING AGAINST THE JLP ARE OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA'S PERSONAL LACK OF POPULARITY AND THE PARTY'S PAST WEAKNESSES IN ORGANIZING SKILLS, ALTHOUGH BOTH OF THOSE LIABILITIES APPEAR TO BE DIMINISHING IN THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN, PARTICULARLY ON THE ORGANIZATION SIDE. THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY'S (PNP) MAJOR ASSETS ARE PRIME MINISTER MANLEY'S PERSONAL CHARISMA AND POPULARITY, THE ADVANTAGES INCUMBENCY GIVES TO USE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES FOR ELCTORAL PURPOSES, PROGRAMS IT HAS INTRODUCED WHICH STILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE APPEAL TO THE JAMAICAN MASSES, ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH, AND GREATER INCLINATION AND ABILITY TO USE VIOLENCE TO INFLUENCE VOTERS. MAJOR UNCERTAINITIES WHICH COULD AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION INCLUDE THE DEGREE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF ELCTROAL FRAUD AND THE EFFECTIVENE S OF CAMPAIGNING IN THE FINAL WEEKS BEFORE THE ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

3. SETTING. IT SEEMS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT THE JAMAICAN ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD LATE IN OCTOBER OR EARLY IN NOVEMBER. WHILE SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN THE RULING PNP REPORTEDLY FAVOR A DELAY IN HOPES OF IMPROVING THE PARTY'S PROSPECTS FOR RE-ELECTION, THE EXTREMELY TIGHT FOREIGN EXCHANGE SITUETION, PRIMIN MANLEY'S REPEATED COMMITTMENT TO HOLD ELECTIONS AS SOON AS THE ELECTORAL MACHINERY IS IN PLACE, THE INCREASING DESIRE OF MOST JAMAICANS TO HOLD THE PROMISED ELECTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND THE PROSPECT OF INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN GOVERNIG THE COUNTRY IN THE ABSENCE OF ELECTIONS ALL ARGUE AGAINST ANY POSTPONEMENT. THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED TO ASSESS THE ELECTORAL PROSPECTS OF THE TWO PARTIES. A SEPARATE TELEGRAM SETS FORTH OUR ANALYSIS OF THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION UNDER DIFFERENCT SCENARIOS FOLLOWING THE ELECTION AND COMMENTSON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY FOR EACH SCENARIO AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.

4. ELECTORAL PROSPECTS. IF A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY, WE BELIEVE THE OPPOSITION JLP WOULD WIN AT LEAST 35 SEATS IN THE 60-SEAT HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON OUR INITIAL STUDY OF THE CHANVES FOR BOTH PARTIES IN EACH OF THE CUNTRY'S SIXTY CONSTITUENCIES. WE HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, TO THE EXTENT THAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO US, THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF EACH PARTY IN EACH CONSTITUENCY, THE POPULAR APPEAL OF EACH CANDIDATE, THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONSTITUENCY, AND RELATED FACTORS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE CONSIDERED.
THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BOTH PARTIES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL AND SUCH ESTIMATES ON ELECTION RESULTS AS ARE AVAILABLE FROM JAMAICA'S LEADING POLLSTER, CARL STONE, AS WELL AS FROM PNP POLLS AND FROM SOURCES WITHIN BOTH PARTIES. A COPY OF OUR CONSTITUENCY-BY-CONSTITUENCY ESTIMATE HAS BEEN POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT. AS THE ELCTIONS APPROACH, THIS ANALYSIS WILL BE REFINED AND ADJUSTED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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5. JLP ADVANTAGES. ENTERING WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE THE LAST MONTH OF THE CAMPAIGN, THE OPPOSITION PARTY ENJOYS A NUMBER OF ADVANTAGES:

A. THE ECONOMY IS THE MAJOR ISSUE IN THE ELECTION AND WORKS AGAINST THE PNP. WHEN THEPNP CAME TO POWER IN 1972, PERCAPITA INCOME WAS J$1440 (IN 1974 JAMAICAN DOLLARS) AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE STOOD AT 22.6 PERCENT. BY 1979, PER CAPITAINCOME HADDECLINEDTOJ$890 (IN 1974 JAMAICAN DOLLARS) AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE STOOD AT 31.4 PERCENT. THE LATEST CARL STONE POLL IDENTIFIES UNEMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC REVOERY AS THE TWO MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE JAMAICAN ELECTORATE. THEJLP HAS EXPLOITED THIS ISSUE IN AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD ATTACK ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PNP BUT HAS NOT YET BEGUN TO SPELL OUT IN DETAIL WHAT POLICIES IT WOULD FOLLOW TO REVERSE THE ECOHOMIC DECLINE.

B. THE OPPOSITION PARTY HAS WON OVER MA Y JAMAICANS WHO SUPPORTED THE PNP IN PAST ELECTIONS, THERBY ADDING TO ITS TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT. OTHER FORMER PNP SUPPORTERS TELL US THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT THE PARTY AS IT IS NOW BUT WILL HOT VOTE JLP. WHILE THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN JAMAICA IS LESS DOMINATED TODAY BY THE TWO MAJOR TRADITIONAL UNIONS, THE ONE FROM WHICH THE JLP SPRANG, THE BUSTAMANTE INDUSTRIAL TRADE UNION (BITU), IS THE MOST POWERFUL IN THE COUNTRY AND IS ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE JLP. THIS INCLUDES BITU PRESIDENT HUGH SHEARER WHOSE SUPPORT FOR SEAGA WAS, UNTIL RECENTLY, LUKEWARM AT BEST. MOST OF JAMAICA'S MIDDLE CLASSES, WHO HAVE NOT LEFT THE ISLAND IN THE EXODUS OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING BUSINESSMEN, INTELLECTUALS AND PROFESSIONALS, HAVE SHIFTED TO THE JLP. FARMERS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO THE JLP AND REMAIN SO. SEVERAL DISAFFECTED PNP POLITICIANS ARE RUNNING AS JLP CANDIDATES OR ARE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE OPPOSITION, AND SOME PNP POLITICIANS ARE MAKING ONLY A LUKEWARM OR NO EFFORT FOR THEIR PARTY. (JLP LEADERS TELL US DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON IS ONE OF THEM.) THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND FEAR OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE RADICALS WITHIN THE PNP HAVE HRROWED THE BASE OF PNP SUPPORT AMONG IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION WHILE BROADENINGT AT OF THE OPPOSITION.

C. THE JLP HAS HAD A LEAD OVER THE PNP IN THE WIDELY-RESPECTED CARL STONE POLL SINCE JUNE 1978. THIS LEAD REACHED A PEAK OF 15.2 PERCENT IN MAY 1980 BUT HAS SLIPPED TO 11.8 FERCENTIN JUNE AND 7.6 PERCENT IN SEPTEMBER. STONE PREDICTS THAT THE CURRENT SEPTEMBER POLL MARGIN SHOULD YIELD 38-40 SEATS FOR THE JLP. A LEAD IN THE STONE POLL GIVES THE JLP A PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OVER THEPNP, IN THAT MANY OF JAMAICA'S SWING VOTERS LIEK TO BE N THE WINNING BANDWAGON.

D. HISTORY ALSO FAVORS THE JLP. JAMAICA STILL HAS A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY, AND IN 36 YEARS OF ELECTIONSNEITHER PARTY HAS WON A THIRD CONSECUTIVE TERM. LIKE VOTERS ELSEWHERE, JAMAICANS TEND TO BLAME THE INCUMBENT PARTY FOR THEIR ECONOMIC WOES AND ARE INCLINED TO GIVE THE A CHANVE.

E. THE SECURITY FORCES, WHICH HELPED THE PNP SWEEP TO VICTORY IN THE 1976 ELECTIONS DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, ARE NEUTRAL OR LEANING TOWARD THE JLP IN 1980. THE ARMY IS LIKELY TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUPPLEMENT THE POLICE IN CONTROLLING POLITICAL VIOLENCE PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. MANY IN THE POLICE ARE CONSPICUOUSLY PRO-JLP.

F. IMPORTANT ELECTORAL REFORMS ARE IN PLACE FOR THE 1980 ELECTION. AN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL ORGANIZATION, RATHER THAN A MINISTER OF THE PARTY IN POWER, NOW CONTROLS THE ELECTION MACHINERY. THE ENUMERATION PROCESS WAS COMPLETED WITH ONLY MINOR PROBLEMS, AND THE JLP MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO GET ITS SUPPORTERS AND SYMPATHIZERS REGISTERED.

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G. THE GLEANER AND THE STAR, THE TWO LARGEST NEWSPAPERS IN JAMAICA, EACH WITH A DAILY CIRCULATION OF OVER 40,000, ARE VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE OPPOSITION.

6. JLP DISADVANTAGES. WORKING AGAINST THE OPPOSITION ARE:

A. THEIR LEADER EDWARD SEAGA LACKS THE CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY OF MICHAEL MANLEY. HE COMES ACROSS AS COOL, ALOOF, RESERVED, AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN PERSONAL RELATIONS. SOME JAMAICANS PERCEIVE HIM AS AUTHORITARIAN, AND HIS LIGHT SKIN COLOR IS A POLITICAL DISADVANTAGE IN THIS 80 PERCENT BLACK COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHILE HE DOES NOT INSPIRE GREAT POLITICAL DEVOTION OR LOYALTY, SEAGA IS RESPECTED FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE, PROFESSIONAL CAPPABILITYES AND DEDICATION TO WORK AND IN RECENT WEEKS HAS WARMED UP CONSIDERABLY AT SEVERAL UNEXPECTEDLY-LARGE JLP RALLIES. CARL STONE CONCLUDES FROM THE RESULTS OF HIS SEPTEMBER POLL (WHICH FAVE SEAGA A 46 TO 36 PERCENT EDGE OVER MANLEY ON THE QUESTION OF WHICH LEADER COULD BEST RUN THE GOVERNMENT IN A CRISIS) THAT, IN CONTRAST TO THE 1976 ELECTIONS, THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE IS OF MUCH LESS IMPORTANCE I 1980.

B. THE JLP IN THE PAST HAS HAD AN INCHOATE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, LARGELY DEPENDINGON THE BITU'S UNION STRUCTURE RATHER THAN DEVELOPING AN EFFICIENT PARTY MACHINE OF ITS OWN. THE PARTY HAS WORKED HARD THIS YEAR TO OVERCOME THIS HANDICAP, HAS PERFORMED WELL IN GETTING ITS SUPPORTERS REGISTERED, AND APPEARS TO BE WELL ORGANIZED TO GET ITS VOTERS TO THE POLL.

C. THE CONTSNIUNG LACK OF SPECIFICS ON PROGRAMS IS CAUSING SOME JAMAICANS TO WONDER WHAT THE JLP'S PROGRAMS WILL BE. SEAGA HAS RESISTED MAKING ESTENSIVE PROMISES WHICH HE KNOWS HE CANT' DELIVER. THE OPPOSITION HAS DELIVERATELY ADOPTED A STRATEGY OF HAMMERING AWAY AT PNP FAILURES AND JLP SUCCESSES IN THE 1960S IN ITS CAMPAIGN PROPAGANDA AND HAS IMPREGNATED IN THE JAMAICAN CONSCIOUSNESS ITS MAIN SLOGAN, "DELIVERANCE IS NEAR." BY CONTRAST, THE PNP IS RUNNING ON ITS RECORD, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY ITS CAMPAIGN SLOGAN, "STANDING FIRM FOR A THIRD TERM." ITS PARTY MANIFESTO SETS FORTH A CONTINUATION OF PAST PROGRAMS WITH GRANDOISE PROMISES INCLUDING 500,000 ADDITIONAL JOBS. THE JLP REPORTEDLY WILL ISSUE ITS MANIFESTO ON/OR AFTER OCTOBER 5 BUT WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT IF IT WANTS TO PUSH A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE OF ITS PROGRAMS.

7. PNP ADVANTAGES. THE STRENGHTS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE PNP ARE, TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE, THE OPPOSITE OF THE JLP'S.

A. MICHAEL MANLEY IS HIS PARTY'S MAJOR ASSET. WITHOUTHIM THE PNP WOULD STAND EARLY A CHANCE IN THIS ELECTION. JAMAICAN POLITICS HAVE CENTERED AROUND TRADITIONAL PARTY LOYALITIES AND THE PERSONALITIES OF MAJOR POLITICAL LEADERS. MICHAEL MANLEY HAS NO IMAGE PROBLEM. WHILE HIS CHARISMA HAS BEEN TARNISHED BY HIS GOVERNMENT'S POOR PERFORMANCE, HE STILL ENJOYS THE POPULAR IMAGE OF THE CHAMPION OF THE POOR AND OPPRESSED ON THE ISLAND, AND HIS PARTY WILL DRAW THE MAJORITY OF ITS SUPPORT FROM THESE SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION.

B. AS THE PARTY IN POWER, THE PNP DERIVES ADVANTAGES FROM ITS INCUMBENCY. IT CAN SELECT AN ELECTION DATE TO ITS MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE. IT HAS OBTAINED SUFFICIENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO INSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FOOD AND FUEL DURING THE JULY-OCTOBER PERIOD, THEREBY MASKING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS FROM SOME JAMAICANS. PATRONAGE JOBS AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS ARE AT ITS DISPOSAL, GIVING TOTHOSE WHO BENEFIT A VESTED INTEREST IN KEEPING THE PNP IN OFFICE. THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED MEDIA, CONSISTING OF THE ISLAND'S ONLY TELEVISION STATION, ONE OF THE TWO RADIO STATIONS AND THE THIRD LARGEST NEWSPAPER (CIRCULATION 18,000), GIVE HEAVY--BUT NOT EXCLUSIVE--COVERAGE TO THE PNP AND ITS LEFTIST ALLIES.

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C. THE SOCIAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS INSTITUTED DURING THE LAST EIGHT YEARS OF PNP RULE INFLUENCE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VOTERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE AT THE LOWER END OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCALE WHO STILL BELIEVE THAT MANLEY'S SOCIALIST PATH WILL HELP THEM MORE THAN SEAGA EMPASIS ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. THE SATE OF THE ECONOMY AND THE MASSIVE MISMANGEMENT OF MANY OF THE PNP PROGRAMS, HOWEVER, WILL WORK AGAINST THE PARTY AMONG SOME OF THESE SAME VOTERS.

D. THE PNP IN THE PAST HAS BEEN THE BETTER ORGANIZED OF THE THE TWO PARTIES, DRAWING MANY OF JAMAICA'S PROFESSIONALS AND INTELLECTUALS INTO ITS RANKS. DESPITE CONSIDERABLE DEFECTION THE PNP RETAINS A SIGNIFICANT CADRE OF DEDICATED WORKERS, AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ITS PRESENT GENERAL SECRETARY DK DUNCAN, AND HIS RADICAL ASSOCIATES, HAS A DISCILPLINE AND COHERENT ORGANIZATION, IT ALSO IS WELL FUNDED, PROBABLY MORE SO THAN THE OPPOSITION.

E. VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL TOOL HAS BEEN AND WILL MOST LIKELY BE USED INCREASINGLY IN THEI ELECTION THE PNP SEEMS MORE INCLINED TO USE SELECTIVE CIOLENCE AND IS REPORTED TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED THAN THE JPLP. AT THE SAME TIME, THE JLP WILL USE VIOLENCE TO PROTECT ITS INTEREST AND TO RESPOND TO PNP PROVCATIONS. HOWEVER THERE ARE MANY JAMAICAN WHO ARE INCREASINGLY OPPOSED TO VIOLENCE, AND THE PARTY WGICH BECOMES R
ECTIFIED WITH ITS USE RISKS SOME LOSS OF SUPPORT.

. PNP DISADVANTAGES. THESE INCLUDE
A. THE ECONOMIC FAILURES OF RECENT YEARS ARE TO A LARGE EXTENG BLAMED ON TH RULING PARTY.
B. THE BASE ON PNP SUPPORT HAS NARROWED. THE PARTY HAS LOST MANY OF ITS TRADITIONAL SUPPORTERS TO THE OPPOSITION.
C. THE SECURITY FORCES CANNOT BE MANIPULATED TO PNP ADVANTAGE AS THEY WERE IN 1976.
D. THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IS LESS SUSCPETIBLE TO MANY OF THE TYPES OF MANIPULATION AND FRAUD WHICH OCCURED IN 1976. FOR EXAMPLE NO LAST MINUTE GERRYMANDERING, S OCCURRED THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE 1976 POLLING DAY, IS POSSIBLE UNLESS THE ELECTIONS ARE DELAYED BEYOND THE END OF NOVEMBER.
E. E. MANLEY'S ATTACKS ON THE US AND HIS PREFERENCE FOR CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE ALIENATED MANY WHO SEE THIS AS A THREAT TO JAMAICA BASIC INTERESTS.

9 [redacted]

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C. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAMPAIGNING IN THE FIRST WEEKS BEFORE THE ELECTION WILL ALSO HAVE A BEARING ON THE RESULTS IN RECENT WEEKS THE JLP HAS BEEN DRAWING UNSUAULLY LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS AT A SERIES OF RALLIES OUTSIDE OF KINGSTON. THE PNP HAS DRAWN SMALLER CROWDS, BUT MANY SAY THE PNP IS HOLDING OFF UNTIL THE LAST TWO WEEKS TO MAKE A FINAL INERSE CAPAIGN EFFORT. THE JLP WILL KEEP

UP ITS PRESENTLY VERY ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING AND ADVERTISIN IF IT GET THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS IT REQUIRES.

10. CONCLUSION. AS THE JAMAICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN ENTERS ITS FINAL STAGES, THE OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES OVER THE RULING PNP. MANLEY HIMSELF, [redacted] IS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS PARTYS CHANCES AND ESTIMATES 32 SEATS AS TH BEST OUTCOME AND 23 SEATS AS TH WORST FOR THE PNP. OTHER PNP LEADERS WITH WHOM EMBOFFS HAVE SPOKEN [redacted] ARE FAR FROM OPTIMISTIC. V IF THE JLP CAN KEEP UP ITS PRESENT HEAVY CAMPAIGNING TO EXPLOIT ITS ADVANTAGES, IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN THE ELECTION.
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